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II.—*The Teaching of a Foreign Literature in connection with the Seminary System.*

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It is my purpose to offer a few suggestions on the teaching of a foreign literature in connection with the so-called seminary system, to add a word regarding that system itself, and to inquire to what extent the methods and scope of the instruction at German universities are available for our own institutions.

As the question has been limited to the teaching of a foreign literature in the seminary or association of advanced students, the consideration of the study of English literature would then be only indirectly included, inasmuch as the methods would need to be somewhat modified in order to conform to the student's greater familiarity with the language. That subject moreover has already received much attention at the various sessions of this Association, and one of our members, PROFESSOR T. W. HUNT of Princeton, published in the *Andover Review* for November, 1885, an article on "Desirable Methods in English Literary Study," which forms a valuable contribution not only with respect to the special topic which he treats, but also in regard to the general question of the study of literature.

How, then, is a foreign literature best taught to advanced students?

As the instruction given must be adapted to the qualifications of the student, much depends upon his proficiency in the special language under consideration. I will assume, as our average student, one who has enjoyed at the start at least two years of preliminary linguistic training, in the proportion of from three to five exercises a week, and who has also enjoyed certain other advantages of study and reading sufficient to have developed in him a fair literary sense, and to have furnished him with an adequate amount of general literary culture.

It does not seem necessary here to go into any detail regarding this preliminary work of the first two years. We may suppose that the student has been thoroughly grounded in the

grammar of the language, has been initiated into methods of word-formation and word-derivation, has examined the laws describing the relations between the various members of the Indo-European family of languages, has had some practice in rendering from English into the foreign language and in translation at sight, has read a variety of selections from different authors illustrating a wide range of style, and has become familiar with a few masterpieces in poetry and in prose. In other words, our average student will be the average Junior, equipped, we trust, with a good knowledge of English and possessing some acquaintance with English literature, in addition to his special acquirements in foreign languages.

That a knowledge of Greek and Latin also would be indispensable, no one perhaps would care to maintain; but it would be folly to assert that without a knowledge of the ancient classics a proper appreciation can be gained of the foundations, the drift, and the inspirations of modern literatures.

The objection may be made that too much time is demanded for this preliminary study; that our ordinary college courses do not admit the opportunity of carrying on the study of the modern languages for three or four consecutive years. We may be reminded that in some institutions of great dignity and age the modern languages have been optional branches, or have been required for only a limited number of hours at an advanced stage in the curriculum. To these objections the answer might be made that a period of two years so employed would seem to be the minimum of time possible for producing the training necessary, that institutions with an inadequate provision of time or teaching-force may expect to attain results correspondingly inadequate, and that the day is fortunately passing by in which the study of the modern languages is made merely auxiliary to the curriculum and treated without proper consideration of their natural and just requirements. The spread of the elective system is everywhere a powerful assistance toward this desirable consummation.

After two years of such preparatory work, then, the student is ready for the advanced or seminary work. This term seminary with us seems to be employed to indicate a variety of methods in teaching, while the word itself is used in German to describe both the place of meeting and the exercise which is generally held there. These exercises abroad appear to range

in character from such as resemble quite nearly our ordinary recitation to those embodying the results of some independent investigation; but the controlling principle is apparently the preparation of the work in connection with a special equipment under the leadership or guidance of the instructor in charge. The professor's own study may frequently be the scene of action, and the material furnished largely from his own supplies. There is sometimes a disposition to confine the term seminary-work to the most advanced stages of investigation, whether literary or linguistic. There is no real objection to this limitation, although in the interests of convenient nomenclature the larger field might be permitted to include the smaller.

With respect to the equipment, the student should have easy access to the following materials, and should be encouraged in their familiar and constant use.

A collection of the best critical editions of the standard literary monuments of the language, beginning with the earliest records. As large a collection as possible of minor literary monuments, pamphlets, journals, correspondence, in short, of all original literary matter, however insignificant. A collection of general and special literary histories, including biographies, essays, monographs and miscellaneous articles. Finally the principal periodicals in the language, both learned and light. Few colleges are able to furnish such an apparatus and the private library of the professor must frequently assist in filling the gaps. In those institutions, however, in which the library appropriations are distributed among departments, a comparatively small annual amount, judiciously expended, will be sufficient to provide gradually a respectable outfit.

Beginnings of this kind have already been made. The special-alcove system at Harvard appears in a modified form at Baltimore, Ann Arbor, Cornell and elsewhere, and we trust that it will not be many years before quarters similar to the admirable language seminary-rooms at Strasburg, or the well-furnished historical department at Johns Hopkins, may be deemed indispensable for teaching properly modern literatures.

A few words may be added regarding the employment of this equipment.

There should be careful study of the works of an author, and careful study of his life and times. The two lines of study are reciprocally illustrative, while the balance should decidedly

incline toward a direct acquaintance with the author's writings. Literary history, however, has also its distinct function and value, affording a clear outline and background for the special study of the author himself.

The work may be performed in two ways: by the ordinary form of class-room instruction with recitation, lecture and comment; and by subdivision of the work among different members under the supervision of the instructor, either assigning to the members of such classes different portions of the same general subject, with references to the proper authorities or sources, or allowing individual members to pursue individual courses of reading or independent lines of investigation, with frequent reports of progress.

In regard to the question whether a written lecture or an address from notes be preferable in the course of such academic instruction, it has been argued that anything read from a written page may as well be printed and circulated for more careful study, and that the dictated phrase is lifeless in comparison with the spoken word. There is danger too that the lecture, once crystallized into a permanent shape, may not receive from year to year the revision which it needs. On the other hand, it is not always convenient or easy to publish at once the result of study and investigation, (although we have noticed that some Scotch students have recently attempted this for their professor, surreptitiously,) while the beneficial and attractive element of style and form is often absent from the extemporary effort. Perhaps the wiser way would be to blend both forms of delivery.

Without attempting here to lay down any detailed course of instruction, it may be said in general that the study of an author should not be divorced from the study of his age, but that the two sides of the examination should be jointly conducted. In like manner the minute study of individual works in respect of style and thought may well be associated with general reviews of groups of works. The function moreover of *comparison* is important,—the comparison, namely, between different works of the same writer composed at different periods in his career, or between different writers of the same school, or between different stages of development of the subject, as the drama, or between different stages of growth of a national literature, or between the literatures of different nations and their reciprocal influence.

Illustrations will readily occur from our common experiences in teaching.

The old German 'Messiads,' the 'Heliand' and OTFRID'S 'Krist,' when compared show many interesting points of contrast. One may note the differing treatment of the Gospel narrative, and the difference in metrical structure, representing on one hand the strong and simple alliterative beat of heathen versification, and on the other, the influence of the gathering force of the Latin strophe of the Christian hymn, concealing within itself the melodious possibilities of assonance and alliteration with the more perfect melody of finished rime. Looking at the circumstances of the composition of the two poems, in one has been found an eloquent proof of the growth of Christianity among the unlettered peoples of the Saxon North; in the other, an attempt to resist in the South the influence of a frivolous and pagan literature. The poems of WALTHER VON DER VOGELWEIDE, when studied in connection with his age, throw interesting side lights upon the social life of his time, and upon the contentions between Emperor and Pope. MARTIN LUTHER'S writings are scarcely intelligible without an examination of middle High German, and in turn assist to an accurate analysis of modern German syntax. To describe the origin of the French or German drama, one must review ecclesiastical literature, and be familiar with the theatre of the ancients. The benefit is evident of such courses as PROFESSOR CRANE'S lectures at Cornell on French society in the seventeenth century, based upon the voluminous memoirs, correspondence, and other literary memorials of that period; or the course of PROFESSOR ELLIOTT at Johns Hopkins, in which the work of the year may be concentrated upon a limited period in literary history, or upon the study of a small group of related dialects, or of a few important linguistic monuments. What useful material for a knowledge of the current impressions in Paris regarding European art and politics is afforded by HEINE'S miscellaneous communications to the *Augsburg Gazette*! What a field, too little cultivated, is afforded by the bulky correspondence of prominent literary characters! Again, not the least beneficial phase of the minute study of the second part of *Faust* is afforded by the social and philosophical problems suggested, and by the discussion of the relations between the Classic and Romantic movements as depicted in the "Helena." Not less attractive is the effort to

fathom the secret of the many erratic manifestations of genius of which every literature yields attractive and baffling illustrations.

A legitimate feature of such seminary work may be the examination by students of new and relevant publications, whether edition or commentary or special treatise, and the presentation of critical notices of their contents. Others desire to discard all adventitious aids, and, leaving unconsidered whatever incrustations have clustered upon the shell, to penetrate to the heart, and to devote the energies of their students to the patient study of the bare untarnished text, the naked thought of the author selected. Such diversities of operations may yet lead to equally profitable results.

As to the relation of the study of literature proper to the study of kindred subjects, one may say that although the teaching of literature be not the teaching of history or of biography, both are essential as a background; and that inasmuch as the province of what is called *Culturgeschichte*,—a sort of literary biology,—trenches upon literary history, it is also to be considered a necessary concomitant of literary studies.

Another minor agency may be included, for its value in creating or stimulating the student's interest, namely, the utilization of illustrative material by means of the stereopticon—an agency at present gradually coming into more general use. Such material would comprise photographs, engravings, paintings, or similar artistic reproductions of persons, places, or events of literary significance, fac-similes of chirography, of manuscripts, of charters, and of everything connected with the science of diplomatics. Let me instance the reproductions of old French texts by GASTON PARIS; the heliotype fac-similes of old manuscripts published at Rome; PROFESSOR ZUPITZA'S recent edition of 'Beowulf,' with the text and transliteration side by side; the phototypes,—in another field,—of classic manuscripts like the Laurentian Sophocles and the Ravenna Aristophanes; the autotypes of the Chaucer manuscripts in the British Museum; the splendid and elaborate publications of the Société de l'École des Chartes just appearing, which are to afford us in beautiful heliogravures reproductions of the most important documents relative to the national history and literature; and even the matter of illustration in such works as STACHE'S 'Deutsche Geschichte,' or KÖNNECKE'S 'Bilderatlas

zur Geschichte der Deutschen Literatur.' Material of this kind, which is often too expensive to be obtained by the separate members of a class, can readily be converted into lantern views and be presented to a class collectively, with appropriate comments, in connection with lecture courses or seminary work; and such an expedient would obviate to a large degree the disadvantages which his remoteness from the great libraries and museums of the world causes the American student to feel. Now for the first time does there seem in this way to be some outlook for more general paleographical studies on this side of the Atlantic.

My remarks have been limited principally to the consideration of foreign *literatures*, leaving untouched the question of the proper methods for dealing with those fascinating and exceedingly important adjuncts of language-training comprised under the rubrics of comparative philology and phonetics. At a meeting of the American Philological Association a few years ago, PROFESSOR JEBB, of Glasgow, alluded to the current criticism that the work of American classical scholars concerned itself too much with grammatical and linguistic subjects, and was too often in statistical form. Certainly this is an honorable tendency, whether displayed with reference to ancient or to modern languages, and possibly the only caution needful might be the comment that the study of belles-lettres is equally arduous, equally exacting, demanding peradventure for finished culture in the teacher an even longer period of apprenticeship, and that it is equally fruitful in valuable results.

From this standpoint the position of modern languages in German universities would perhaps not be entirely satisfactory as the norm for corresponding American institutions, although a tendency appears manifest yonder which promises ultimately a well rounded curriculum. In respect to German, at least, (and my impression is that the same observation will in some measure hold good with regard to English and French also,) an examination of the courses offered will reveal that the literature since LUTHER has been subordinated to a somewhat absorbing study of the earlier dialects. The ordinary professorships have been almost invariably held by those whose chief interest lies in this earlier field, while the later period has been in the hands of instructors of a lower rank. At Berlin, PROFESSOR SCHERER, literary historian as well as philologist, exhibited a fine type of

the many-sided and finished scholar. Yet a seminary room for Germanic languages was finally ready to be occupied only in the year of his death, and the library of that seminary, although comprising the valuable private collection of MÜLLENHOFF, contained, when first made public, almost no literature after the fourteenth or fifteenth century. SCHERER's successor, ERICH SCHMIDT, enjoys the distinction of holding perhaps the only ordinary professorship in Germany which is occupied by a scholar solely devoted to modern German literature. And even this chair was first offered to one or two men of the other type. It is certainly no insignificant fact that this departure takes place at the largest and probably the leading university of the land.

At Leipsic the conditions are somewhat similar. Although the instruction under ZARNCKE and HILDEBRAND, BIEDERMANN and VON BAHDER and KÖGEL, leaves little to be desired, and although some exercises are conducted there in connection with private libraries, the library of the German seminary is very nearly innocent of New High German monuments. Among the younger generation of scholars, too, in Germany we find that those who are devoted to the older dialects, as BEHAGHEL at Basel, BRAUNE at Giessen, (now at Heidelberg,) KLUGE at Jena, PAUL at Freiburg, SIEVERS at Halle, STEINMEYER at Erlangen, are ordinary or full professors, while men like GEIGER at Berlin, HENNING at Strasburg, MINCK at Vienna, SAUER at Prague, SEUFFERT at Graz, STRAUCH at Tübingen, and others whose interests lie in more recent fields, are of the secondary grade. The older professors occasionally pay some attention to the later literature, and historians like ONCKEN at Giessen, or philosophers like KUNO FISCHER at Heidelberg or HAYM at Halle, divide their efforts at times between their special sphere and subjects in German literature. But it is fair to maintain that the *preponderance* of interest at German universities, and the field most favored for advancement to the doctorate, may be found in the more strictly philological studies of the earlier period. I will not presume to debate the wisdom of this tendency yonder, where the language courses in the gymnasiums are also to be reckoned in, nor to claim too much prominence for the counter-movement, which seems nevertheless to bring with it a widening of the outlook and a truer conception of proportion. But, whatever be the

task of the German university, it cannot be precisely the same task as ours, nor are its ways, while admirable necessarily to be our ways. The German university is largely a nursery for specialists, an invaluable training-ground for teachers and investigators. Based upon the common schools, and affording the sole supply for the learned professions, it has an intimate and unshaken hold upon the nation. We, too, have an obligation to perform toward our nation also. The minor part of our own duty may be to train a limited number of bright minds in progressive and independent work; the major portion of our labors must be consumed in helping large numbers of students to gain such a vantage ground of vision that their sympathies will be permanently enlarged, and their intellectual life possess a generous and catholic range whose influence will touch distant circles which we can never directly reach, but which ought to share whatever diversities of gifts a university may have at its command. Is there any better method of advancing this aim than the careful and sympathetic study of the noblest expressions of modern literary thought?

It has been the great privilege of many here present to draw liberally from the fountains of learning which spring so freely from Teutonic sources; and the severe and successful methods there in vogue are exerting a powerful and not unfavorable influence upon our own higher education. But may we not retain our gratitude and acknowledge our manifold indebtedness without too general a surrender to foreign precedents? Perhaps I may be permitted, in closing, to strengthen and make clear the position which I am endeavoring to maintain, by quoting some words from a memorable oration delivered by the President of this Association upon a memorable occasion. At the Harvard Celebration last year, MR. LOWELL said:

“It (i. e. the college earlier in the century), set more store by the marrow than by the bone that encased it. It made language as it should be, a ladder to literature, and not literature a ladder to language.

“I think I see a tendency to train young men in the languages as if they were all to be editors (i. e. of manuscripts, texts, etc.) and not lovers of polite literature. Education, we are often told, is a drawing out of the faculties,—may they not be drawn too thin! I am not undervaluing philology or accuracy of scholarship. Both are excellent and admirable in their places. But

philology is less beautiful to me than philosophy, as MILTON understood the word, and mere accuracy is to Truth as a plaster cast to the marble statue; it gives the facts but not their meaning. If I must choose, I had rather a young man should be intimate with the genius of the Greek dramatic poets than with the metres of their choruses, though I should be glad to have him on easy terms with both.

"I hope then," MR. LOWELL concludes, "that the day will come when a competent professor may lecture here also for three years on the first three vowels of the Romance Alphabet, and find fit audience though few. I hope the day may never come when the weightier matters of language, namely, such parts of its literature as have overcome death by reason of their wisdom and of the beauty in which it is incarnated, such parts as are universal by reason of their civilizing properties, their power to elevate and fortify the mind,—I hope the day may never come when these are not predominant in the teaching given here. Let the humanities be maintained undiminished in their ancient right. Leave in their traditional preëminence those arts that were rightly called liberal; those studies that kindle the imagination, and through it irradiate the reason; those studies that manumitted the modern mind; those in which the brains of finest temper have found alike their stimulus and their repose, taught by them that the power of intellect is heightened in proportion as it is made gracious by measure and sympathy. Give us science, too, but give first of all and last of all the science that ennobles life and makes it generous."